

SIKH MARCH FOR BAISAKHI  
SUPPORTS FREE KHALISTAN

**HON. DAN BURTON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 13, 1999*

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to attend the Khalsa March this past Saturday. The March celebrated the 300th anniversary of the Sikh Nation. Over 40,000 people from all over America attended this special event. I thank my friend Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, for inviting me to this auspicious occasion.

There are 22 million Sikhs in the world and nearly 500,000 here in the United States. They have enriched American life in almost every walk of life, including law, farming, medicine and many other. I was interested in learning that a Sikh named Dalip Singh Saund even served in the U.S. Congress. I would like to take this opportunity to salute their contributions to this country.

Mr. Speaker, the March was truly a success. There was a tremendous amount of excitement in the air, as they celebrated their heritage of freedom and showed their support for regaining their lost sovereignty in an independent homeland they call khalistan. Their struggle against the oppression that the Indian government inflicts on them should be supported by every American and by those who support freedom around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, the Council of Khalistan has issued a press release about the March. I would like to place this press release into the RECORD for the information of my colleagues.

[From the Council of Khalistan, April 12, 1999]

**KHALSA MARCH VERY SUCCESSFUL—OVER 40,000 SIKHS COME TO WASHINGTON, DC TO CELEBRATE 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF KHALSA PANTH**

WASHINGTON, DC, APRIL 12.—Over 40,000 Sikhs, more than twice as many as expected, came to Washington, D.C. on Saturday, April 10 to participate in Khalsa March 1999, celebrating the 300th anniversary of the day that Guru Gobind Singh baptized the Sikh Nation. It was the first time that so many Sikh gathered in the Nation's Capital. A sea of saffron turbans and scarves could be seen around the Reflecting Pool. There are 22 million Sikhs world wide and about 500,000 here in the United States.

The mood of attendees was jubilant and excited as they celebrated the Sikh heritage. The celebration began in front of the Lincoln Memorial, which is a symbol of freedom, and the participants marched to the U.S. Capitol. The stage displayed pictures of Guru Gobind Singh Baptizing the Panj Pyaras (the Five Beloved Ones), depictions of Gurdwara Kesgarh Sahib, the birthplace of the Sikh Nation, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the holiest Sikh shrine, other major events in Sikh history, and banners with slogans like "Indian Free Khalistan", "Long Live Khalistan", etc.

"Guru Gobind Singh gave the Sikh Nation a heritage of freedom," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, the coordinator of the march. "Today we had a joyous celebration of that heritage," he said. "Now we must dedicate ourselves to freeing our homeland, Khalistan."

Participants in the march celebrated with family and friends and raised slogans. They carried banners that said "India Free

Khalistan," "Long Live Khalistan," and "Raj Karega Khalsa." There was a float bearing a replica of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the holiest of Sikh shrines, and another promoting "Khalistan—the Sikh Nation on the Move."

Speakers included dignitaries from Punjab, Khalistan like Justice Ajit Singh Bains, chairman of the Punjab Human Rights Organization (PHRO), and retired General Narinder Singh, as well as U.S. Congress Dan Burton (R-Ind.), Dr. Walter Landry, Executive Director of the Think-Tank for National Self-Determination, representatives of Sikh women and youth, and others.

Justice Bains discussed the genocide and human-rights violations that the Indian government has committed against the Sikh Nation since 1984. He said that there is no rule of law in Punjab. He pointed out the Indian government's policy of mass cremations of Sikhs, which the Indian supreme Court called "worse than a genocide."

General Narinder Singh spoke of the sovereignty of the Sikh Nation. He noted that Guru Gobind Singh gave the Sikh Nation sovereignty and that this sovereignty is part of the Khalsa birthright. He said that there is no reason why the Khalsa Panth should not have sovereignty.

Congressman Burton offered his continued support for the Sikh cause. He spoke against the Indian government's atrocities against Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, and other minorities. He urged that the United States stop supporting the Indian government. He said that Sikhs should have their freedom and that the United States should support it. Many other Members of Congress sent their greetings, including House Minority Leader David Bonior (D-Mich.), Congressman Nick Rahall (D-WV), and others.

Mayor Anthony Williams of Washington, D.C. sent a message of congratulations. He wrote, "It is my distinct pleasure to extend warm greetings and congratulations to the members, guests and friends of the Council of Khalistan as you celebrate your 300th anniversary of the initiation of the Khalsa Panth. This is a significant milestone in the history of the world's religions as you celebrate Vaisakhee Day." Mayor Williams added that "you are to be congratulated for your efforts to provide spiritual enhancement to the principles of peace, prosperity, dignity, integrity, human rights and justice for all."

Dr. Paramjit Singh Ajrawat, the Secretary of the march and Master of Ceremonies at the Lincoln Memorial, reminded the audience that Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa and recognized the whole human race as equal, including gender equality. He noted that Abraham Lincoln also worked to end slavery.

Attendees passed resolutions to reiterate their support for a free Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that was declared independent on October 7, 1987; to honor Sikh martyrs; to ask the Indian government to release the tens of thousands of Sikh political prisoners it is holding; and to demand that the Akal Takht, the seat of the Sikh religion, be freed from the Badal government, asking the Khalsa Panth to boycott and oppose the Badal government; asking the Khalsa Panth to boycott and oppose the Badal government; and to declare there full support for Jathedar Bhairu Singh as the genuine Jathedar of the Akal Takht.

"Sikhs are religiously, culturally, and linguistically distinct from Hindu India or any other nation," said Dr. Aulakh. "On this once-in-a-lifetime, milestone anniversary, let us dedicate ourselves to reclaiming our lost sovereignty," he said.

"Nations and religions that do not have political power do not survive," Dr. Aulakh

said. "Under Indian rule, the Sikhs are the victims of genocide," he said.

Since 1984, the Indian government has murdered more than 250,000 Sikhs. Tens of thousands more languish in Indian jails without charge or trial. Some of the have been there since 1984. India has also murdered more than 200,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947, over 60,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Assamese, Manipuris, Tamils, Dalits ("black untouchables," the aboriginal people of the subcontinent), and others.

"The atrocities clearly show that for Sikhs, India is not a democracy," said Dr. Aulakh. "Every day we pray 'Raj Kare Ga Khalsa,' the Khalsa shall rule," he said. "It is time to keep our promise to the Guru, live up to our heritage, and unite to liberate Khalistan," he said.

**"MY SERVICE TO AMERICA"**

**HON. EARL POMEROY**

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 13, 1999*

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize an impressive young North Dakotan. Margretta Hanson of Blanchard is the winner of the 1999 Veterans of Foreign Wars' Voice of Democracy Broadcast Scriptwriting Contest. Miss Hanson's essay is based on the theme "My Service To America."

I am very pleased to see such wonderful patriotism and values coming from North Dakota's youth. It is my pleasure to submit Miss Hanson's essay for inclusion in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

**"MY SERVICE TO AMERICA"**

1998-99 VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

NORTH DAKOTA WINNER MARGRETTA HANSON

"Be all that you can be," is a popular slogan of the United States Army. By joining the armed forces, one is showing true patriotism and devotion to the protection and betterment of our great nation, the United States of America. To put one's life on the line by defending the freedoms of the people of this country is a noble deed, but I feel that this is not the only way that one can give service to America. My service to America is to "be all that I can be" as an American citizen. We don't have to risk our lives to make a difference. By simply smiling as you pass someone on the street or in the hallway, you're bringing joy into the lives of others. Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." I want to make the most of the talents and opportunities that I have been blessed with.

Some people say that the future of the United States is looking glum. They fear that our youth are committing more crimes, they fear that our youth are abusing more illegal substances, they fear that our youth are showing less respect, they fear that our youth are becoming less motivated, and they fear that our youth are lacking ethical morals and values. What can I do to change the destiny of my generation? Benjamin Franklin wrote in Poor Richard's Almanac, "A good example is the best sermon of all." Through my service to America, I am "preaching" to my peers through the positive choices I make in my life. Joined with the efforts of other young men and women of my generation who are also striving to make positive choices in their personal lives, my efforts will make a difference.